A/CONF.216/PC/9

United Nations

Report of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

Second session
(7 and 8 March 2011)

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United Nations • New York, 2011

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ISSN 978-92-1-104609-0

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Chapter I
Introduction

1. By its resolution 64/236, the General Assembly decided to organize, in 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, and to establish a preparatory committee to carry out the preparations for the Conference. The first session of the Preparatory Committee was held from 17-19 May 2010 (see A/CONF.216/PC/5) and the second session was held on 7 and 8 March 2011.

Chapter II
Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

2. The Preparatory Committee held its second session on 7 and 8 March 2011. It held four meetings (1st to 4th), and a number of side events (see annex I).

3. The session was opened by the Co-Chair, John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda).

4. At its 1st meeting, on 7 March 2011, an introductory statement was made by the Secretary-General of the Conference, Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

5. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the representative of Brazil, as host Government of the Conference, on the status of preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012.

6. Also at the 1st meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Argentina (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China), Hungary (on behalf of the European Union), Fiji (on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States), Nauru (on behalf of Pacific Small Island Developing States), Nepal (on behalf of Least Developed Countries) and Chile (on behalf of the Rio Group).

B. Agenda and organization of work

7. At its 1st meeting, on 7 March, the Preparatory Committee adopted the provisional agenda for its second session, as contained in document A/CONF.216/PC/6, and approved its organization of work. The agenda was as follows:

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
2. Progress to date and remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits in the area of sustainable development, as well as an analysis of the themes of the Conference.
3. Organizational and procedural matters.
4. Draft rules of procedure for the Conference.
5. Adoption of the report of the Preparatory Committee on its second session.

8. At the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee approved a request for accreditation of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, an intergovernmental organization, to participate as an observer in the work of the Preparatory Committee.

C. Attendance

9. The session was attended by representatives of 115 States Members of the United Nations, observers for other States Members of the United Nations and of the

European Union, representatives of organizations of the United Nations system and observers for intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations. A list of participants will be issued in document A/CONF.216/PC/INF/2.

D. Conclusion of the session

10. At its 4th meeting, on 8 March, statements were made by the representatives of Barbados (on behalf of the Caribbean Community) and Maldives (on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States).

11. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the representative of the European Union (on behalf of its member States).

12. Also at the 4th meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the following major groups: women; local authorities; workers and trade unions; children and youth; business and industry; non-governmental organizations; farmers; scientific and technological community; and indigenous peoples.

13. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the representative of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

14. At the 4th meeting, following the closing remarks by the Secretary-General of the Conference, the Co-Chair, Park In-kook (Republic of Korea), made concluding remarks and declared closed the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

E. Documentation

15. The list of documents before the second session of the Preparatory Committee is contained in annex II.

Chapter III

Progress to date and remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits in the area of sustainable development, as well as an analysis of the themes of the Conference

16. The Preparatory Committee considered the progress to date and remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits in the area of sustainable development, as well as an analysis of the themes of the Conference (agenda item 2) at its 1st to 4th meetings, on 7 and 8 March 2011.

17. At the 1st meeting, on 7 March, the Secretary-General of the Conference and Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the objective and themes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (A/CONF.216/PC/7) and the note by the Secretariat containing a synthesis report on best practices and lessons learned on the objective and themes of the Conference (A/CONF.216/PC/8).

Summary by the Co-Chair (Antigua and Barbuda)

18. The session was chaired by John Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda. He advised that the Bureau was reaching out to all stakeholders to mobilize political and financial support for the preparatory process. In that regard, he made an appeal to donors to make further contributions to the trust fund for the Commission on Sustainable Development for the Conference. He stated that the process for the preparation of the outcome document would be open, transparent, led by delegations and would take all stakeholder inputs into consideration. It was the intention of the Bureau to share a zero draft of the outcome document with delegations in January 2012. He announced that the outcome of the second preparatory committee would be in the form of a summary by the Chair.

19. The Co-Chair (Antigua and Barbuda) invited delegations to consider the following questions in the opening session:

(a) What will the conference deliver?

(b) What will the outcome be?

(c) How will the second United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development be different from other sustainable development conferences?

(d) What are the major issues and challenges?

20. The Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Sha, then introduced the reports prepared by the Secretariat and provided an update on the preparations for the Conference. He introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the objective and themes of the Conference (A/CONF.216/PC.7). He highlighted that the green economy needed to be built from the bottom up and respond to national development conditions. He noted that many countries were pursuing national strategies related to the green economy, but that not enough was being done. Countries needed to consider the impacts on poverty and human development. He also noted that for some countries the near-term transition costs were a concern, in particular employment, trade and possible economic losses.

21. With regard to the theme of strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development, he noted that deliberations on that issue should address all levels of government. Currently, sustainable development governance was fragmented and governance challenges were interlinked and cross-cutting. Any reform should strengthen the three pillars of sustainable development in a balanced way in order to ensure convergence.

22. He then introduced the update synthesis report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.216/PC/8). The report includes information from seven additional countries, as well as statements by a number of stakeholders and delegations from the 1st intersessional meeting, held in January 2011.

23. Mr. Sha also drew attention to two additional reports. The first, commissioned by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, is entitled "The transition to the green economy: benefits, challenges and risks from a sustainable development perspective". It examines macroeconomic policy, trade, investment and technology issues and assesses the challenges, opportunities and risks for developing countries. The second report, prepared by UNEP, is entitled "Towards a green economy: pathways to sustainable development and poverty eradication".

24. Mr. Sha then provided an update on preparations for the Conference, highlighting the engagement of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Development Group, the regional commissions and major groups. He also thanked countries who had come forward and offered to host and support various meetings related to conference themes.

25. The meeting welcomed the accreditation of the International Oceanographic Commission as an official observer.

26. The delegation of Brazil then gave an update on preparations under way in Rio de Janeiro. It was announced that the Conference would be held from 4 to 6 June 2012, with the Preparatory Committee meetings being held from 28 to 30 May 2012.

27. Argentina, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, stated that the way forward should be through a dynamic, effective, transparent and inclusive process. Preparations needed to consider at an early stage the outline of the outcome document. With regard to the objective of the conference, while diverging views existed, the Group of 77 and China understood that the Conference must result in more effective implementation and the provision of adequate financial resources. Efforts to strengthen the institutional mechanisms for sustainable development should address all three pillars: economic, social and environmental.

28. With regard to the green economy, a common understanding of its definition was needed, as well as of its costs and benefits. The green economy must be considered in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. It should also respect the policy space of each country in accordance with particular circumstances and priorities. Continuing concerns related to the green economy included the need to ensure social inclusion and decent jobs, to address trade-related issues, including avoiding "green protectionism", and transition costs.

29. Challenges to sustainable development that should be addressed at the conference included the financial and economic crisis, the food and energy crisis

and the challenges related to biodiversity, desertification, water scarcity, the frequency of disasters and disaster recovery.

30. The Group of 77 and China stated that the means of implementation were of critical importance in addressing the implementation gaps in the sustainable development agenda. This included the provision of new and additional financial resources, the fulfilment of commitments to official development assistance, the pursuit of development-oriented solutions to the debt problem of developing countries and addressing the shortfall of technology transfer.

31. Hungary, on behalf of the European Union, stated that the outcome of the Conference should include two key elements: (a) a global commitment to the green economy, accompanied by a road map defining concrete steps at the international and national levels, as well as a guide on best practices, instruments, indicators, case studies and policies; and (b) the transformation of UNEP into a United Nations specialized agency for the environment, as part of a strengthened and renewed sustainable development governance framework.

32. Fiji, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, stated that the small island developing States were dependent on the blue ocean economy and that conservation of ocean resources should therefore be a key challenge for consideration by the Conference.

33. With respect to the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action, countries should fulfil their responsibilities and commitments related to technology transfer and financing for development. A focused and sober assessment should be taken of where failures lay and how best to address them. There was an urgent need for baselines and benchmarks for progress. Targets and goals should be focused on key priorities. Improved data flows were needed in order to better monitor the sustainable development of small island developing States.

34. Nauru, on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States, reiterated that, for those States, a green economy was a blue economy, so oceans and fishery issues must be given prominence. The small island developing States wanted the Conference to provide support for sustainable ocean development and protection of resources. Measures could include actions to reduce fishing overcapacity, to establish marine protected areas and to desist from using oceans as dumping grounds.

35. Nepal, on behalf of least developed countries, noted that the United Nations Conference on LDCs would be held in May 2011 and was expected to aid in designing a new and robust international support architecture for the least developed countries. Least developed countries had structural constraints, vulnerabilities and lacked capacities. The green economy should not add conditionality or be a burden to least developed countries but should afford them adequate policy space.

36. Chile, on behalf of the Rio Group, stated that the success of the Conference would be measured by the ability of developing countries to address their development challenges. Institutional reform must balance all three pillars of sustainable development and respond to the priorities of developing countries. Developed countries should provide adequate and predictable financing. Regional and subregional structures should be given priority, particularly in supporting

scientific development and capacity-building. Finally, countries needed to understand better the benefits and possible risks of the green economy. A flexible approach should be permitted that addressed the specificities of different levels and conditions of development.

A. Objective of the Conference

37. At the 1st meeting, on 7 March, the Committee held an interactive discussion on the objective of the Conference, which would be to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assessing the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development and addressing new and emerging challenges, under the chairmanship of the Co-Chair (Antigua and Barbuda).

Summary by the Co-Chair (Antigua and Barbuda)

38. A number of delegations stressed the importance of renewed political commitment at the international and national levels. This could be achieved by strengthening the convergence of the three pillars of sustainable development, aiming at poverty eradication. This would result in social equity and economic growth and would be based on sustainable management of natural resources and protection of the environment.

39. Some delegations stressed that efforts to guide policy and decision-making should track, monitor, report and improve data regarding sustainable development at the national level. At the international level, it was necessary to formulate specific and forward-looking programmes of action and promote global sustainable development processes. At the same time, those processes needed to be inclusive, respect different models of sustainable development and leave countries enough space to make their own policies.

40. It was stated that economic growth was a part of any sustainable development strategy and should be balanced in such a way as to take into consideration the environment, natural resources and social equity, addressing poverty and improving the status of women.

41. Many delegations stated that since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in 1992 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in 2002, and despite achievements made, a number of implementation gaps and challenges persisted and a number of international commitments had not been met. The current multiple crises, particularly the food crises, climate change and economic and financial crises, pose serious threats to the achievement of sustainable development and internationally agreed development goals.

42. Regarding the fulfilment of international commitments, there was a lack of coherent approaches in the areas of finance, trade, investment, capacity-building and technology transfer. There was a need to realize commitments on official development assistance to mobilize international financial resources to support a green economy transition and to achieve an effective, equitable, durable and development-oriented solution to the debt problem.

43. Transfer of technology should be expanded according to the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building and the goals contained in chapter 34 of Agenda 21 and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Additionally, developing countries should be enabled to develop their own technology, including building local capacity. In that context, a review of intellectual property rights had been proposed in order to ensure they did not create a barrier for the sustainable development of developing countries.

44. A universal, rule-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system that promoted development and a development-oriented outcome of the Doha round were also prerequisites for achieving sustainable development.

45. Several delegations stressed that good governance at all levels was important for achieving sustainable development goals. A number of delegations underlined the importance of public-private and multi-stakeholder partnerships, as well as the inclusion of civil society, women, vulnerable groups and indigenous communities, the private sector, local and regional governments and academia in the implementation of sustainable development.

46. Education for sustainable development and science and technology had also been underlined as an important tool to enhance human capacity development and to enable development of skill sets vital to emerging sectors of a green economy and development in general.

47. There was also broad agreement that all countries and stakeholders needed to enhance efforts on concrete actions and measures to achieve sustainable development. Success stories and policies that had worked needed to be identified and analysed, including how best those policies fit and could be implemented in different contexts and how they could be scaled up.

48. Regarding new and emerging issues, a number of delegations stressed the importance of sustainable management of aquatic and marine resources, especially fisheries; water scarcity, in particular its impact on food security; loss of biodiversity, owing to pressure from human activities and climate change; increasing urbanization, in particular problems of transport and waste management; energy use, in particular energy security and access to energy; and drought, desertification, land degradation, mountain fragility, extreme weather events and floods.

49. Delegations also expressed their expectation that those emerging challenges would be addressed in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and in such a manner as to provide adequate resources and transfer of technology in order to build capacity of developing countries to be able to deal with them adequately without jeopardizing development gains, especially achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

B. Themes of the Conference

1. Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication

50. At the 2nd meeting, on 7 March, the Committee held an interactive discussion on the theme of the Conference, "Green economy in the context of sustainable

development and poverty eradication", under the chairmanship of the Co-Chair (Republic of Korea).

Summary by the Co-Chair (Republic of Korea)

51. The following elements were emphasized in respect of a green economy:

(a) Several delegations reiterated that the concept of a green economy should not replace that of sustainable development, but that the green economy should be envisioned within the overarching concept and goals of sustainable development. Some delegations indicated that a green economy should be seen as a vehicle for growth and sustainable development;

(b) Several delegations mentioned that poverty eradication remained the top priority for developing countries and that the creation of decent jobs was a key element of such priorities;

(c) Several delegations mentioned that the focus on a green economy should not distract from achieving the full implementation of previous commitments made by the international community;

(d) Several delegations mentioned that greening economies could be a driving force for growth and sustainable development and should be geared to eradicating poverty and low-carbon development. A number of delegations mentioned that a blue economy approach also needed to be considered, in line with Agenda 21;

(e) Several delegations underscored that multiple global crises had undermined progress towards sustainable development in many countries. In particular, the continued volatility of food and oil prices was catastrophic for the poor. Several delegations emphasized the need to reduce fossil fuel subsidies and agricultural subsidies in developed countries;

(f) Some delegations mentioned that a green economy was relevant for countries at all stages of development, as shown by the many examples of green economy policies, strategies, programmes, projects and good practices successfully developed across the globe, adding that strong political leadership was needed to guide green economy strategies;

(g) A number of delegations mentioned that efficient management of natural resources was a central element of a green economy, including in efforts to eradicate poverty;

(h) Some delegations expressed that youth employment and decent jobs should be considered explicitly as objectives of green economy strategies and policies.

52. The following guiding principles were suggested:

(a) Several delegations reaffirmed the need for the discussions to be consistent with the outcomes of previous global conferences, including Agenda 21 and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Rio principles as well as the Millennium Development Goals, the Barbados Plan of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, as well as the need to achieve adequate balance among the three pillars of sustainable development;

(b) Several delegations mentioned that there was no "one-size-fits-all" approach to a green economy. The green economy had to capture differences of scale and scope between countries. Green economy policies had to be decided nationally and regionally, according to the specific circumstances, needs and capabilities of the countries. Flexibility and sufficient policy space were required. Any green economy transition should be fully consistent with the sovereign rights of countries over their natural resources, as reflected in principle 2 of the Rio Declaration;

(c) Several delegations emphasized the links between a green economy and the need to address unsustainable consumption and production patterns, with developed countries taking the lead;

(d) Several delegations stressed that poverty eradication and social well-being should guide efforts towards a green economy and sustainable development. A green economy needed to build resilience and economic security;

(e) Several delegations stressed that participatory approaches and inclusiveness were essential, including the private sector, governments at local and regional levels and civil society, including local communities, women and youth. Looking for solutions and answers developed at the local level was also important. Gender equality was an important dimension of the discussions on the green economy;

(f) Several delegations emphasized the need for effective means of implementation, including transfer of clean technology and related know-how, as well as capacity-building, and also emphasized that financial resources needed to be mobilized in innovative ways, including from the private sector;

(g) A number of delegations mentioned that synergies with other international processes or forum should be pursued, in particular with climate change discussions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and with issues from the thematic cluster of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its nineteenth session;

(h) Some delegations suggested that new development models that were country-specific were needed. The transition to a green economy required policies and institutional reform at the international and national levels;

(i) Several delegations emphasized that the transition to a green economy should not be used to distort trade and must not lead to green protectionism or additional conditionalities. Trade should be pro-development and enable job creation;

(j) Several delegations emphasized that further dialogue was needed to achieve a better understanding of the scope, costs, benefits and risks of the transition towards a green economy.

53. A number of actions were emphasized by various delegations:

(a) Some delegations mentioned that greening of economies encompassed green industrialization, green education, green economic governance, including corporate environmental and social responsibility, green public procurement and green jobs, integrated planning and sustainable consumption;

(b) Several delegations emphasized the importance of economic instruments, including green taxation and fiscal incentives, fees and levies on hazardous waste and air pollution, the elimination of export subsidies and subsidies to polluting inputs and, more generally, instruments based on the "polluter pays" principle;

(c) Several delegations proposed an evaluation of the costing of ecosystem services and internalizing of environmental externalities as key elements of a green economy, as well as green accounting, while some delegations cautioned against further marketization of nature's services;

(d) Several delegations mentioned that the priority sectors for a green economy included energy access, renewable energy, energy efficiency, including in buildings and construction, resource efficiency, water conservation, forests, land and soil conservation, agriculture and food security, ocean ecosystems and ocean acidification, fisheries, sustainable waste management, natural resource extraction and restoration of natural assets;

(e) Some of the delegations stressed that the transition costs of a green economy had to be identified and actively addressed, including by providing the private sector with disincentives to use "brown" technologies and with incentives to use green technologies and to transfer them to developing countries, as well as by promoting investment in human capital;

(f) Some delegations emphasized the importance of support from Member States for developing countries in terms of capacity-building, citing the example of the Global Green Growth Institute, which was recently established for disseminating knowledge and experience in green growth models and strategies;

(g) Some delegations stated that monitoring, including through the use of indicators, was important to assessing progress.

54. The following were considered by some delegations as possible elements for inclusion in a Conference outcome:

(a) A green economy road map was suggested by some delegations, which would include national and international actions, timelines, actors, tools and a set of targets. Some delegations said that the road map should show a practical way forward and be voluntary;

(b) Some delegations mentioned that a toolbox of best practices needed to be made available for public authorities, non-governmental organizations and businesses;

(c) Several delegations mentioned that an outcome from the Conference must be the allocation of resources to promote research, development, transfer and deployment of clean technologies, especially in developing countries;

(d) Some delegations stressed that the Conference should promote mechanisms available to the international community in order to enhance capacity-building and the sharing of knowledge, experience and practices;

(e) Several delegations mentioned that new additional and innovative financial resources needed to be made available, including through public-private partnerships, and that official development assistance commitments needed to be met;

(f) Some delegations suggested that the Conference could provide a platform for the ratification of international conventions relevant to sustainable development and a green economy;

(g) Several delegations proposed an international agreement against speculations in oil and food;

(h) Some delegations proposed the creation of a green economy fund, dedicated to the transfer of clean technologies;

(i) Some delegations mentioned the possibility of an implementation mechanism.

2. Institutional framework for sustainable development

55. At the 3rd and 4th meetings, on 8 March, the Committee held an interactive discussion on the theme of the Conference, "Institutional framework for sustainable development", under the chairmanship of the Co-Chair (Antigua and Barbuda).

Summary by the Co-Chair (Antigua and Barbuda)

56. The achievement of an effective and efficient institutional framework for sustainable development at all levels was crucial to the full implementation of Agenda 21 and the follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and to meeting emerging sustainable development challenges. Efforts to strengthen the institutional framework for sustainable development should focus on strengthening an architecture that supports effective implementation and policy integration of sustainable development at all levels. Deliberations on the institutional framework should be guided by chapter 11 of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, building on Agenda 21.

57. Many delegations expressed the view that reforms to institutional arrangements could be based on the existing structure, while enhancing coordination, coherence and synergies. Institutional arrangements should ensure the balance among the three pillars of sustainable development, promoting mutually supportive mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels. Steps taken to strengthen the institutional framework should take into account national conditions and priorities, and the global framework should support national actions. The view was expressed that the normative and operational aspects of the sustainable development agenda should be clearly distinguished.

58. Many delegations highlighted the means of implementation in relation to the institutional framework, including technology transfer and capacity-building. The provision of adequate and predictable financing was emphasized in order to ensure the effective implementation of the United Nations sustainable development agenda. In that regard, many delegations underlined the need for new and additional resources.

59. A group of countries reaffirmed the key role of the General Assembly in the institutional framework for sustainable development. In considering the social, economic and environmental pillars, the Economic and Social Council should promote greater coordination, complementarity, effectiveness and efficiency of its functional commissions, programmes and other subsidiary bodies relevant to the

implementation of Agenda 21 and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It was necessary to renew the effort to strengthen the Council as an effective forum for the multilateral discussion of economic and social themes through a sustainable development approach, which necessarily included an environmental perspective. One country stated that an in-depth discussion of sustainable development in the annual ministerial review could serve to reinforce the role of the Council.

60. Many delegations highlighted that the Commission on Sustainable Development, as the high-level intergovernmental body responsible for sustainable development within the United Nations system, was the only forum in which sustainable development was addressed in an integrated fashion. An enhanced role for the Commission should include reviewing and monitoring progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and ensuring coherence of implementation, initiatives and partnerships. Delegations called for the Commission to be strengthened and made more efficient; a number of delegations made concrete proposals in that regard. One country and a major group proposed that the Commission should be elevated to the status of a council body under the General Assembly. The need to improve the implementation of the decisions of the Commission was emphasized, with a number of delegations proposing consideration of a member State-driven peer review mechanism.

61. One country outlined a proposal for an umbrella organization, based on existing institutions and bodies of the United Nations system and focused on the promotion of sustainable development and the implementation of existing multilateral commitments. The need for coherence and efficiency, as well as effectiveness, would necessitate the redefinition of the role and the mandates of such institutions, in particular the Economic and Social Council, UNEP and the Commission, with the umbrella organization acting as the overarching structure aimed at coordinating the institutions as well as the multilateral environmental agreements, with an emphasis on integrating the economic, social and environmental pillars. Several delegations expressed interest in learning more about the proposal.

62. A group of countries identified strengthening international environmental governance as a key element and condition for improving the institutional framework for sustainable development. A country, on behalf of the President of the UNEP Governing Council, and in accordance with the decision of the Governing Council, invited the Preparatory Committee to consider the options for broader institutional reform identified in the outcome of the meetings of the Consultative Group of Ministers or High-level Representative on International Environmental Governance, held in Kenya and Finland. Further in accordance with decision of the Governing Council, the Preparatory Committee was also invited to initiate a full analysis of the financial, structural and legal implications and comparative advantages of the options identified in the outcome, utilizing the expertise of the relevant United Nations system entities, including UNEP, and relevant stakeholders and the major groups eligible to participate in the Committee. Many delegations expressed support for the preparation of such an analysis.

63. A group of countries called for UNEP to be upgraded into a specialized agency of the United Nations, explaining that the proposal did not entail adding a new institution, but rather transforming UNEP into an organization more capable of

contributing to sustainable development. Other delegations, recognizing the need to strengthen the environmental pillar, preferred taking steps to enhance UNEP by reinforcing its functions, increasing financial support to it and raising its efficiency. A number of delegations questioned the focus on a single institution, suggesting a preference for mainstreaming and overall strengthening of the environmental pillar.

64. Many delegations pointed to the urgent need for enhanced coordination and cooperation among all international organizations, agencies and conventions, so as to ensure implementation of commitments, promote synergies and allow the participation of major groups. They also underlined the need for the United Nations system to enhance its efficiency in the area of sustainable development, so as to ensure effective delivery. One country noted the need to make the most of the limited resources available within the United Nations system, through enhanced coordination and rationalization of the various institutions, including the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements. A number of delegations drew attention to the need for the international financial institutions, the World Trade Organization and multilateral development banks to give priority to sustainable development, within their mandates, and to enhance coordination with the United Nations system. Several delegations noted that developing countries should have greater participation in the decision-making processes of international financial institutions.

65. Institutional strengthening should not be limited only to the international level but should include mechanisms at the regional level, so that existing regional mechanisms could be strengthened to integrate sustainable development fully into regional development paradigms. A number of delegations addressed an enhanced role for United Nations regional commissions, including coordination and supporting bottom-up action. Reference was made to the importance of national sustainable development strategies for multilevel governance, as well as lessons learned from the "one-United Nations" initiative.

66. Many speakers stated that the institutional framework should be inclusive and encourage the participation of all stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society, non-governmental organizations and the scientific community. A group of countries noted the potential of sustainable development councils in strengthening the engagement of major groups in sustainable development. There was also a need for the institutional framework to support scientific research and development in the area of sustainable development.

Chapter IV
Organizational and procedural matters

67. The Preparatory Committee considered the question of organizational and procedural matters (agenda item 3) at its 4th meeting, on 8 March, by holding an interactive discussion on the expected outcomes and next steps in the preparatory process, including discussions on the contents/format of the outcome document, under the chairmanship of the Co-Chair (Republic of Korea).

Summary by the Co-Chair (Republic of Korea)

68. The closing session was chaired by the Co-Chair (Republic of Korea). He invited delegations to consider the next steps of the process in the coming months and the expected outcome of the Conference, including the structure and content of the outcome document. In that regard, he underscored that the document should be action-oriented. Delegations were invited to consider three options in respect of its format: a comprehensive option that would include a declaration and programme of action; a practical option that would consist of a shorter text; and a political option, which would be shaped to ensure the broadest political buy-in.

69. In the preliminary exchange, some delegations expressed the view that the outcome document should reflect the specific mandate given the Conference and its review process. Support was therefore conveyed by them for a focused political document, addressing the themes and objectives of the Conference from cross-cutting perspectives. The importance of the Conference securing renewed political commitment was underscored.

70. There were divergent views on the emphasis that should be given to the principal themes in the outcome of the Conference. One perspective was that the outcome should focus on the shaping of a specific road map to achieve a green economy on an international scale, incorporating common goals, strategies, actions and timelines, while observing national priorities. Another was that the Conference should not essentially be about a green economy and that there was need for a strategic action plan to address gaps in implementation as identified through the assessment of progress made on the past mandates reached at Rio de Janeiro and Johannesburg.

71. In that regard, a number of key issues were reiterated: the need for enhanced financial and technical support to accelerate implementation; the importance of ensuring synergy with the Millennium Development Goals targets and maintaining focus on poverty alleviation; the need for a stronger science-policy interface; the value of North-South and South-South cooperation for building capacity and promoting best practices; the need to pay attention to the concerns of the least developed countries and to the special needs of small island developing States; and the need to strengthen partnerships as a mechanism to advance implementation of the sustainable development agenda, through renewed engagement with the private sector and civil society organizations. There was also a strong call for support to be provided for national, regional and subregional consultations.

72. Attention was also paid to the mandate to strengthen the institutional framework for sustainable development. Delegations reiterated that the outcome document should address improved sustainable development governance within each of the three pillars as well as in an integrated and balanced manner. Emphasis

was placed by some delegations on the outcome of the Nairobi-Helsinki process, and the need for further consideration to be given to the five options contained in a proposed reform package for international environmental governance.

73. The regional commissions reiterated their readiness to support the preparatory process, highlighting plans to organize regional meetings between September and December 2011 to address the Conference objectives and the two themes. The capacity of the regional commissions to provide coordinated sectoral and cross-sectoral support to member States was underscored, as was their ongoing contribution to analytical and normative work at the regional level, and their monitoring and reporting on regional developments. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, speaking on behalf of the regional commissions, therefore expressed the hope that the outcome document would reflect the importance of strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development at the regional level.

74. After the preliminary exchange of views, the Co-Chair invited delegations to consider a draft decision prepared by the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee, addressing the ongoing process for preparation of the outcome document. The decision requested the Bureau to initiate an open, transparent and inclusive process, led by Member States, to prepare in a timely manner a draft text, based upon all preparatory inputs, to serve as the basis for an outcome document for the Conference.

75. By that decision, the Bureau would initiate informal consultations on the preparation of a draft text and, based on contributions received from Member States and all relevant stakeholders by 1 November 2011, would prepare a compilation text to serve as the basis for the preparation of a zero draft of the outcome document. The Bureau would present the compilation text to Member States and other stakeholders at the intersessional meeting of the Conference, to be held in mid-December 2011, and seek their comments and guidance on the text. The Co-Chairs were then requested on behalf of the Bureau to present the zero draft of the outcome document for consideration by Member States and other stakeholders no later than early January 2012. The draft decision also recommended that three days in January be set aside for consultations on the draft, that one week each in February, March and April 2012 be devoted to informal informal consultations on the draft and that the meetings to be convened within existing resources.

76. The draft decision was adopted by the Preparatory Committee. The Chair of the Group of 77 and China placed on record its dismay that the informal informal consultations would be subject to the limitations of existing resources. Other members of the Group of 77 and China echoed those concerns, and also underscored the importance attached to the participation of expert representatives from capitals, reiterating the need for additional financial support to facilitate the widest participation in the consultative process.

77. In his concluding remarks, the Secretary-General of the Conference urged delegations to keep the core objectives of the Conference in mind as the preparatory process unfolded in the coming months. He also encouraged Member States which have not yet done so to submit their national reports in response to the review questionnaire for inclusion in an updated synthesis report. Mr. Sha also reiterated the need for an increased infusion of financial resources to ensure the fullest participation of developing countries and stakeholders of major groups in the Conference process.

Chapter V

Adoption of the report of the Preparatory Committee on its second session

78. At the 4th meeting, on 8 March, the Rapporteur of the Preparatory Committee, Tania Valerie Raguž (Croatia), introduced the draft report of the Preparatory Committee on its second session (A/CONF.216/PC/L.3) (agenda item 5).

Action taken by the Committee

79. At the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee approved the draft report and entrusted the Rapporteur (Croatia), in collaboration with the Bureau and the Secretariat, with its finalization.

Chapter VI

Decision adopted by the Preparatory Committee at its second session

80. At the 4th meeting, on 8 March 2011, the Preparatory Committee had before it a draft decision entitled "Process for the preparation of the draft outcome document for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development" submitted by the Bureau and circulated in an informal paper, in English only.

81. At the same meeting, following a statement by the Co-Chair (Republic of Korea), statements were made by the representatives of Argentina (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China), Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

82. Also at the 4th meeting, the Committee adopted the draft decision as decision 2/1. The decision read as follows:

Process for the preparation of the draft outcome document for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

The second Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development:

(a) *Requests* the Bureau to initiate an open, transparent and inclusive process, led by Member States, to prepare in a timely manner a draft text, based upon all preparatory inputs, to serve as the basis for an outcome document for the Conference;

(b) *Invites* all Member States, the relevant United Nations system organizations and relevant stakeholders to provide their inputs and contributions in writing by 1 November 2011 for inclusion in a compilation document to serve as the basis for the preparation of a zero draft of the outcome document;

(c) *Requests* the Bureau to compile these inputs and contributions and present their compilation text to Member States and other stakeholders at the second intersessional meeting, to be held in mid-December 2011, to seek their comments and further guidance;

(d) *Calls upon* the Co-Chairs, on behalf of the Bureau, to present the zero draft of the outcome document for consideration by Member States and other stakeholders no later than early January 2012;

(e) *Recommends* the Bureau to convene a three-day meeting in January 2012, for the purposes of having discussions on the zero draft of the outcome document, and to set aside one full week for negotiations in each of the months of February, March and April 2012, ensuring that all these meetings are informal informals and, as such, are to be accommodated within existing resources.

Annex I

Side events

1. A total of sixteen side events and two related events were held on the margins of the official meetings of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. These were organized by a diverse range of stakeholders, including international organizations, Governments and major groups and featured dynamic interactive discussions focused on the main themes of the Conference — the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development.

2. Information on the events, including guidelines, schedules and highlights is available from the website of the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs at http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?page=view&type=13&nr=28&menu=24.

Annex II

List of documents before the second session of the Preparatory Committee

Document symbol	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
A/CONF.216/PC/6	1	Provisional agenda
A/CONF.216/PC/7	2	Report of the Secretary-General on the objective and themes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
A/CONF.216/PC/8	2	Note by the Secretariat: synthesis report on best practices and lessons learned on the objective and themes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
A/CONF.216/PC/L.3	5	Draft report of second session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
A/CONF.216/PC/INF.2		List of participants

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